STAR WARS™

DARTH MAUL

MARVEL

005

BUNN
ROSS
WOODARD

DARTH MAUL

Book I, Part V

Sith apprentice Darth Maul has infiltrated an auction attended by the most dangerous crime bosses in the galaxy against the will of his Master, Darth Sidious. The prize: Jedi Padawan Eldra Kaitis, who was captured by profiteering gangster Xev Xrexus. With a group of bounty hunters – including Cad Bane and Aurra Sing – Maul has kidnapped the Padawan with the intention of killing her to satiate his vengeance against the Jedi.

Having discovered the theft, Xrexes shoots the hunters' vessel down and invites the auction attendees to hunt them down. Maul and Eldra split off from their group in order to pick off their pursuers. Despite working together, they bait each other until finally, their lightsabers clash....

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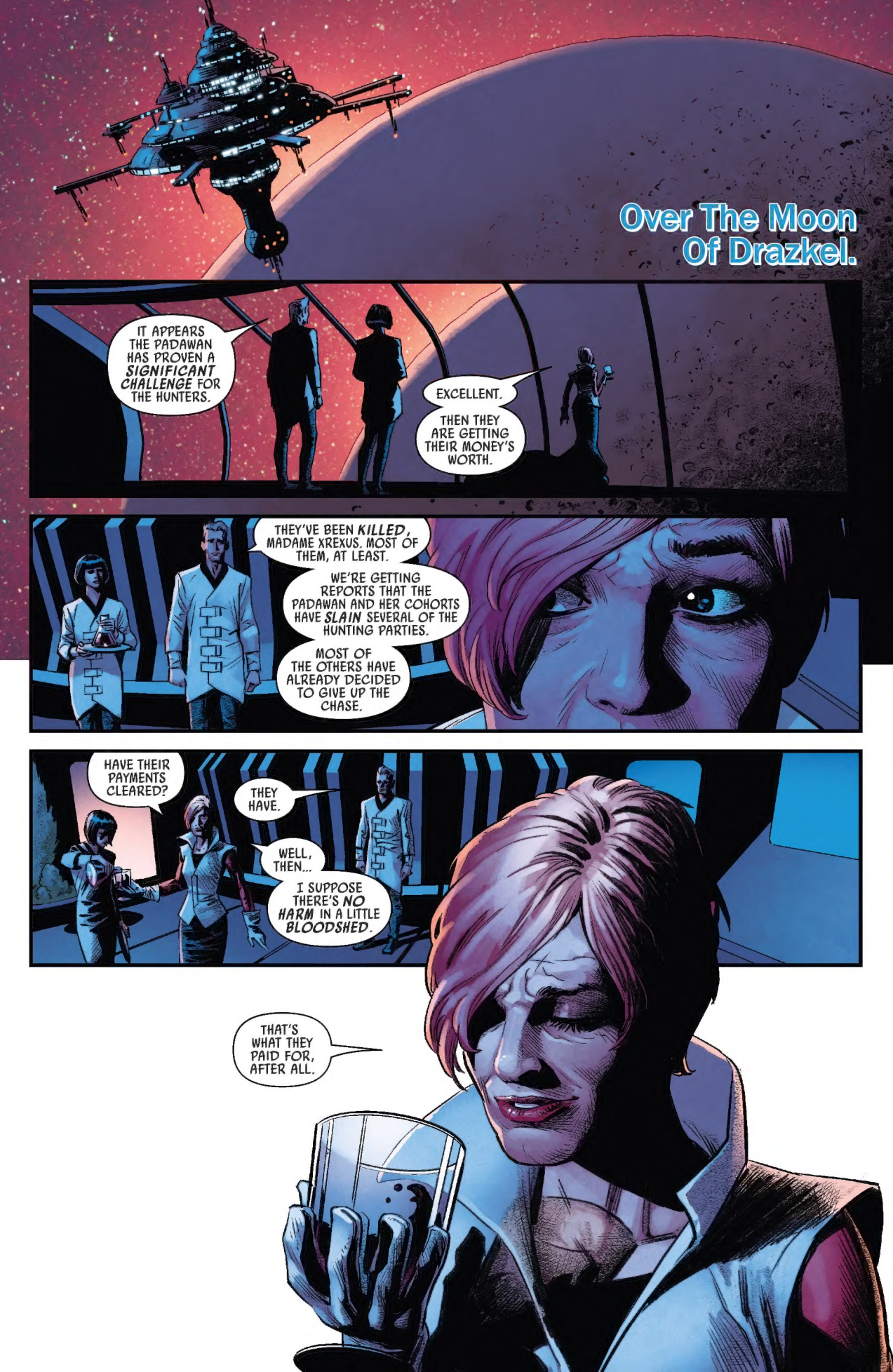

Over The Moon Of Drazkel.
IT APPEARS THE PADAWAN HAS PROVEN A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE FOR THE HUNTERS.
EXCELLENT.
THEN THEY ARE GETTING THEIR MONEY'S WORTH.
THEY'VE BEEN KILLED, MADAME XREXUS. MOST OF THEM, AT LEAST.
WE'RE GETTING REPORTS THAT THE PADAWAN AND HER COHORTS HAVE SLAIN SEVERAL OF THE HUNTING PARTIES.
MOST OF THE OTHERS HAVE ALREADY DECIDED TO GIVE UP THE CHASE.
HAVE THEIR PAYMENTS CLEARED?
THEY HAVE.
WELL, THEN...
I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO HARM IN A LITTLE BLOODSHED.
THAT'S WHAT THEY PAID FOR, AFTER ALL.

FOR THIS MOMENT, I HAVE RISKED *EVERYTHING*.
I HAVE BEEN TRAINED FOR ONE TASK. MY RAGE HAS BEEN HONED INTO A WEAPON SERVING ONE PURPOSE.
TO KILL JEDI.
YET I HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO WAIT... TO BIDE MY TIME... TO MUZZLE MY ANGER.
IN SECRECY, I STALKED THIS ENEMY.
IF MY MASTER LEARNS OF THIS BETRAYAL, ALL MY TRAINING WOULD BE FOR NAUGHT.
YET AS LIGHTSABER FLARES AGAINST LIGHTSABER FOR THIS FIRST TIME, I KNOW ONE THING FOR CERTAIN.

IT IS WORTH IT.
ELDRA KAITIS.
SHE IS CUNNING... FAST...STRONG WITH THE FORCE.
BUT SHE IS NOT MY EQUAL.
UNNF!
SHE IS-- LIKE ALL JEDI-- INFERIOR.
BUT I NEED THIS FIGHT TO PROVE IT TO MYSELF.
THAT IS WHY SHE MUST DIE...

...HERE ON THIS DESOLATE MOON.
"THERE-- TWO SHIPS."
OUR TICKET OFF THIS ROCK.
TAKE YOUR PICK, AURRA.
DEPENDS ON WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT, BANE.
THE TRANDOSHAN SHIP'S GOT MORE GET-UP-AND-GO.
I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.
BUT THE WEEQUAY ARE LIKELY TO HAVE MORE... PROFITABLE CARGO.
DECISIONS, DECISIONS.
TIME IS MONEY, SO LET'S MAKE THIS QUICK.
TRY TO KEEP DAMAGE TO THE SHIP TO A MINIMUM.
I DON'T WANT TO BREAK DOWN IN THE MIDDLE OF SPACE.
FIRE IN THE HOLE.

ERR--
T-TAK!
TAK!
FSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
SMOKE BOMBS!
WE'RE UNDER--
VVRAK!
VRAK!
TOO EASY.

THEY'RE GOING FOR THE TRANDOSHAN SHIP!
WHAT DO WE DO?
WHY SHOULD WE CARE?
I AIN'T MAKING FRIENDS WITH THOSE LIZARDS...AND I AIN'T GONNA BE A HERO.

VRAK!
VRAK!

TSK.
YOU REALLY SHOULD HAVE BEEN WATCHING YOUR OWN BACKS, HONEY.
RUBBER-NECKING GETS YOU NOWHERE.
NNNH--

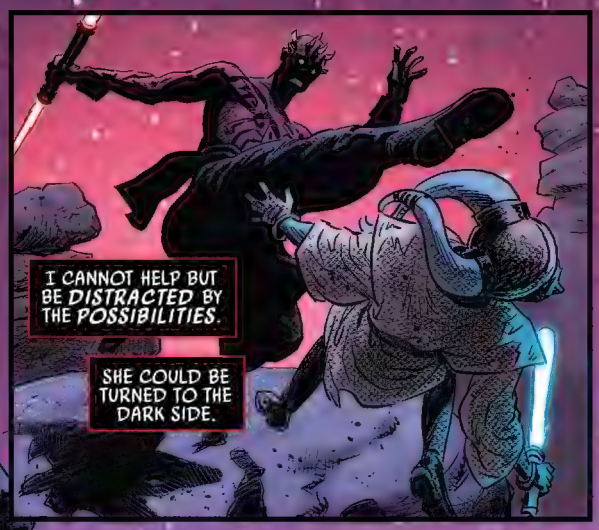
LEAVE HIM ALIVE.
WE'LL TAKE HIM WITH US.
WHY?
WE DON'T NEED A HOSTAGE, VORDHEILO.

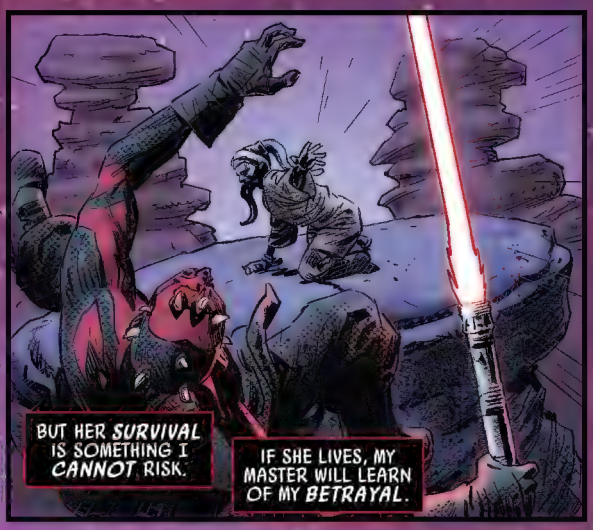
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT A HOSTAGE.
THIS IS A SNACK.

THAT'S MY RIDE.
WELCOME ABOARD, BANE.
WHERE TO?
OUR CLIENT SAID TO TEAR THROUGH THE OTHER SHIPS.
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO.
SHOULD BE SIMPLE ENOUGH.
THEY WON'T BE EXPECTING AN ATTACK FROM ONE OF THE OTHER HUNTING PARTIES.
THEN WE PICK UP MAUL...

"...ASSUMING HE'S STILL ALIVE."
HHT!
SHE SURPRISES ME...
AGH!
...TAKES ADVANTAGE OF MY OVERCONFIDENCE.
I THOUGHT SHE WAS FINISHED...
...DEFEATED BEFORE THE BATTLE HAD EVEN STARTED.
BUT I MISJUDGED HER.
I UNDER-ESTIMATED HER SPIRIT.
YES.
THIS IS THE BATTLE I'VE WANTED.

THE PADAWAN DEMANDS MY ATTENTION IF NOT MY RESPECT.
A LAPSE IN CONCENTRATION...
...ONE MISSTEP...
...AND SHE'LL CUT ME DOWN.
SHE DEFENDS--YES--BUT I CAN SEE IT, IN HER EYES...
...IN HER MOVEMENTS...
...ELDRA KAITIS IS BIDING HER TIME... WAITING FOR THE PERFECT INSTANT IN WHICH TO STRIKE.
I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU BUTCHER ME.
IN THIS WAY, SHE IS MORE LIKE THE SITH THAN I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED.
AND--EVEN IF YOU DID--I'M NOT THE JEDI KNIGHT YOU WANT TO FIGHT.
I'M JUST A STUDENT--A PADAWAN.


I CANNOT HELP BUT BE DISTRACTED BY THE POSSIBILITIES.
SHE COULD BE TURNED TO THE DARK SIDE.


BUT HER SURVIVAL IS SOMETHING I CANNOT RISK.
IF SHE LIVES, MY MASTER WILL LEARN OF MY BETRAYAL.

AND STILL...EVEN WITH THE CERTAINTY OF MY ACTIONS BEFORE ME... I CANNOT FOCUS.
ANOTHER THRILLING PROSPECT DANCES THROUGH MY MIND.

WILL ALL THE JEDI I AM DESTINED TO KILL...
...THE PADAWANS AND THE KNIGHTS ALIKE...
...PRESENT ME WITH SUCH A WORTHY CHALLENGE?

A WASTED EFFORT.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO THROW YOUR WEAPON, MAKE SURE YOU HIT YOUR TARGET.

I WASN'T THROWING IT AT YOU.

KRRRRMMBBLE
RRRRMMBBLE-
KRK-KRNCH
AH--

HNN--
MAKE NO MISTAKE, ELDRA KAITIS.
YOU ARE A JEDI.

AND--JUST LIKE THAT--IT IS DONE.
I HAVE KILLED MY FIRST JEDI.
THE FIRST OF MANY.
HER LIGHT HAS BEEN SNUFFED.
AND I FEEL...

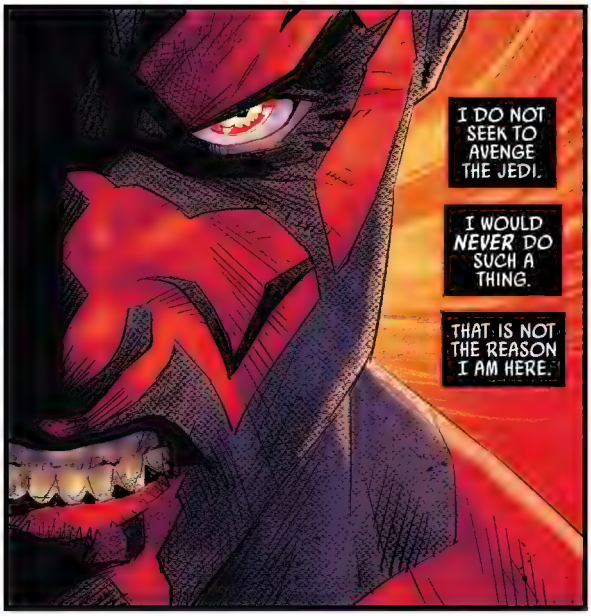
IS...IS SOMEONE OUT THERE?
I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEONE.
I'VE BEEN WANDERING... I'M AFRAID I CAN'T SEE.
OH... PLEASE BE FRIENDLY.

WHERE?
I EXPECTED THE BOUNTY HUNTERS TO ABANDON ME.
AND YET HERE THEY ARE.
IT WOULD APPEAR I HAVE UNDERESTIMATED THEM AS WELL.
THE FORCE IS NOT STRONG WITH THEM.
BUT THE DESIRE FOR PAYMENT IS.
THEY NEED ME... TO RETURN HOME WITH THEM... TO PAY THEM.
I WILL SEE TO IT THAT THEY ARE COMPENSATED.
BUT I WILL NOT BE TRAVELING WITH THEM.

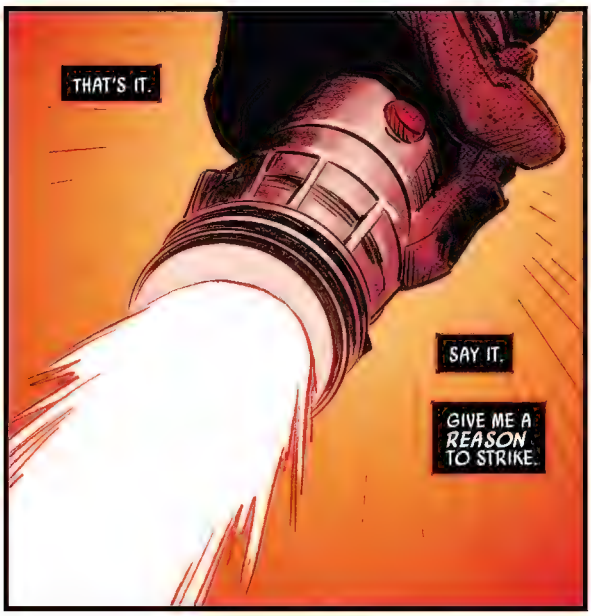
THEIRS IS NOT THE ONLY DEBT I MUST REPAY.
MORE CORELLIAN WINE.
I'M AFRAID I'VE GONE DRY HERE.
HELLO?
ARE ANY OF MY COUNTLESS, OH-SO-ATTENTIVE SERVANTS LISTENING?
I ASKED FOR MORE WINE.
I EXPECT A RESPONSE.
YOU WILL NOT GET ONE.
THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
AH.
OF COURSE.
IF I HAD KNOWN I HAD SO LITTLE TIME LEFT, I WOULD HAVE REQUESTED A BETTER VINTAGE.

I DON'T SUPPOSE I COULD BARTER FOR MY LIFE?
LET ME LIVE AND I'LL MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE.
YOUR MONEY IS USELESS TO ME.

THIS IS VENGEANCE, THEN?
FOR THE GIRL?
FOR THE PADAWAN?
NO.


I DO NOT SEEK TO AVENGE THE JEDI.
I WOULD NEVER DO SUCH A THING.
THAT IS NOT THE REASON I AM HERE.

THAT IS WHAT YOUR KIND TRADES IN, IS IT NOT?
REVENGE.
YES-- I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.
ALTHOUGH I THOUGHT YOU ALL DIED OFF LONG AGO.


THAT'S IT.
SAY IT.
GIVE ME A REASON TO STRIKE.

SITH.

Coruscant.
TELL ME, MY APPRENTICE.
DO YOU FEEL SATISFIED?
NOW THAT YOU HAVE SLAIN THE PADAWAN, HAS YOUR BLOODLUST BEEN SATED?
YOU...
YOU KNEW?
OF COURSE.
WAS IT NOT I WHO SET YOU ON THIS PATH?
DID YOU BELIEVE YOU WOULD UNCOVER A SECRET TO WHICH I WAS NOT ALREADY PRIVY?
A TRIAL.
YOU WERE TESTING ME... TESTING MY LOYALTY.
AND I HAVE FAILED.

HAVE YOU?

THE SITH WERE BORN IN DEFIANCE.
YOU HAVE BUT EMBRACED THE VERY NATURE OF OUR ORDER.

AND SO I ASK AGAIN:
ARE YOU SATISFIED?

NO.

GOOD.

AT LAST I KNOW HOW IT FEELS, TAKING A JEDI LIFE.
I DID NOT FORESEE THIS.
I EXPECTED TO BE FULFILLED--AT LEAST MOMENTARILY--BY THE ACT.
BUT MY RAGE... MY HATRED... HAS ONLY INTENSIFIED.
ELDRA KAITIS DIED...AND I ONLY FEEL MORE EMPTY.
AN EMPTINESS I HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO FILL IN ONLY ONE WAY...
...BY SLAYING THE JEDI.
ELDRA KAITIS WAS BUT THE FIRST.
NOW I MUST ONLY... WAIT.
The End

MACE WINDU
NEXT ISSUE: